

Title: Overview

Purpose

To inform the public and local programs of WIC Program components and operations and provide a mechanism for their input into program administration.

Authority

Section 17 [42 U.S.C. 1786], Child Nutrition Act of 1966. WIC regulations are published by the Federal Register in the Code of Federal Regulations, 7 C.F.R. Part 246 with an effective date of January 1, 2012.

Policy

Public Law 7CFR 95-627 defines the purpose of WIC:

“Congress finds that substantial numbers of pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children from families with inadequate income are at special risk with respect to their physical and mental health by reason of inadequate nutrition or health care or both. The purpose of WIC is to provide supplemental foods and nutrition education through local programs to eligible persons. The WIC program shall serve as an adjunct to good health care during critical times of growth and development in order to prevent the occurrence of health problems and improve the health status of these persons.”

I. WIC Program History

- A. The Montana WIC Program began in 1974, with two pilot projects on the Fort Peck and Northern Cheyenne Reservations. Approximately 800 women, infants and children received program benefits monthly. Total program funds at that time were approximately \$120,000.
- B. Currently over 20,000 participants per month receive WIC benefits through 27 local WIC Programs (including seven Indian Reservations). See the listing of Montana State WIC Program Local Clinics and Service Area Maps.

II. WIC Program Description

- A. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program provides low income, pregnant, lactating and postpartum women, infants and children up to age five, at nutrition risk, with:
 - 1. Nutrition screening, education and counseling to improve eating behaviors and reduce or eliminate nutrition problems.
 - 2. Access to preventive health programs and referral to private and/or public health providers.
 - 3. Selected foods to supplement diets lacking nutrients needed during this critical time of growth and development.

III. Organizational Overview

- A. Funds for food and administrative costs are funneled from USDA, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), to the State WIC Agency, which in Montana is the State Department of Public Health and Human Services, Public Health & Safety Division, Family and Community Health Bureau, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- B. The State WIC Agency makes grants to local programs which provide direct services to participants. Responsibilities for delivery of services are divided into three levels:

**MONTANA STATE PLAN & POLICY MANUAL
CHAPTER ONE**

USDA Regional Office Denver, Colorado	State WIC Agency Helena, MT	Local Agency
Act as a clearinghouse for USDA policy and information	Follow USDA regulations; make policies and develop procedures for program operations	Follow Federal and State policies and procedures
Provide technical assistance	Provide technical assistance to local programs	Employ a qualified CPA and additional professional and clerical staff as appropriate; notify the State WIC Agency when vacancies occur
Distribute funds to state agencies via published funding formulas	Provide program funding to local programs through contracts via an established funding formula	Maintain financial, administrative and participant records
	Maintain responsible fiscal operations	Determine eligibility of applicants and certify those eligible for program benefits
Perform management evaluations on state and local programs	Perform management evaluations of local programs	
Provide guidance as requested	Ensure valid and consistent nutrition training is available to local program staff; provide opportunities for appropriate continuing education	Provide nutrition education to participants in accord with the nutrition education plan and nutrition services standards
	Review, evaluate and follow-up on local program breastfeeding and nutrition plans.	Provide certain minimum health services to participants, including but not limited to referral to and follow-up of appropriate medical care
	Maintain a drug free workplace	Maintain a drug free workplace